

REMARKS

Claims 1-11, 17-18 and 21 are the only claims pending.

Claims 12-16 and 19-20 are cancelled.

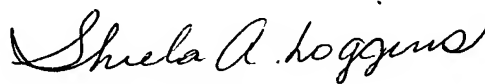
Original claims 1 and 17 have been amended from the original preliminary amendment filed on March 2, 2004. The phrase "and the formed polymer in step (b) is not a gelled polymer" is added to both claims 1 and 17. Thus the method wherein b) is a gelled polymer is excluded. This amendment is supported by the disclosure on page 1, paragraph 3.

New claim 21 dependent upon claim 1 has been introduced to specify one embodiment in which the polymer is prepared by reverse phase polymerization either by emulsion polymerization or in the form of polymeric beads by suspension polymerization. Basis for this claim 21 can be found in paragraph 2, page 7 of the present application.

No new matter has been added.

Applicants aver that the claims are now in better form for examination. An Action on the merits of the claims is respectfully awaited. In the event that minor amendments will further prosecution, applicants request that the examiner contact the undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,



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